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Economic and Social Council

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Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance

Draft resolution submitted by the Vice-President of the Council, Masood Khan (Pakistan), on the basis of informal consultations

Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

The Economic and Social Council,

Reaffirming General Assembly resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991 and the guiding principles contained in the annex thereto, and recalling other relevant resolutions of the Assembly and relevant resolutions and agreed conclusions of the Economic and Social Council,

Reaffirming also the principles of neutrality, humanity, impartiality and independence for the provision of humanitarian assistance, and reaffirming the need for all actors engaged in the provision of humanitarian assistance in situations of complex emergencies and natural disasters to promote and fully respect those principles,

Recalling its decision 2013/212 of 25 April 2013, in which the Council decided that the theme for the humanitarian affairs segment of its substantive session of 2013 would be "The future of humanitarian affairs: towards greater inclusiveness, coordination, interoperability and effectiveness" and that it would convene two panels, on the topics "Reducing vulnerability, improving capacities and managing risks: an approach for humanitarian and development actors to work together" and "Promoting humanitarian innovation for improved response",

Expressing its deep concern at the increasing challenges facing Member States and the United Nations humanitarian response capacity posed by the consequences of natural disasters, including those related to the continuing impact of climate change, by the ongoing impact of the financial and economic crisis and by the global food crisis and continuing food insecurity, and the potential of those challenges to increase the need for resources for disaster risk reduction, preparedness and humanitarian assistance, including in developing countries,

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Expressing grave concern at the increase in the number of people affected by humanitarian emergencies, including those associated with natural hazards and complex emergencies, at the increased impact of natural disasters and at the displacement resulting from humanitarian emergencies,

Reiterating the need to mainstream a gender perspective into humanitarian assistance in a comprehensive and consistent manner,

Condemning the increasing number of attacks and other acts of violence against humanitarian personnel, facilities, assets and supplies, including medical personnel, vehicles and facilities, and expressing deep concern about the negative implications of such attacks for the provision of humanitarian assistance to affected populations,

Noting with grave concern that violence, including sexual and gender-based violence, and violence against children, continues to be deliberately directed against civilian populations in many emergency situations,

Emphasizing that building and strengthening resilience at the local, national, and regional levels is critical for reducing the impact of disasters, including by saving lives, reducing suffering, mitigating damage to property and providing a more predictable and effective delivery of assistance and relief, and in this regard, while recognizing that building resilience is a long-term development process, stressing the need for continued investment in preparedness, prevention, mitigation and response capacity,

Emphasizing also the importance of improving information-sharing among Member States and the United Nations system and, where appropriate, with relevant humanitarian and development organizations, about risks that can lead to humanitarian crises, and of investing in building capacity, in particular for developing countries, to analyse, manage and reduce such risks and vulnerabilities to hazards, as well as, where appropriate, to improve risk analysis and planning,

Recognizing the clear relationship between emergency response, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development, and reaffirming that, in order to ensure a smooth transition from relief to rehabilitation, reconstruction and development, emergency assistance must be provided in ways that will be supportive of recovery and long-term development and that emergency measures should be seen as a step towards sustainable development, and in this regard highlighting the importance of closer cooperation between national stakeholders, including the private sector, as appropriate, and humanitarian and development actors,

Noting the contribution, as appropriate, of relevant regional and subregional organizations in the provision of humanitarian assistance within their region, upon the request of the affected State,

Recognizing that volunteerism can make an important contribution to community and nationally-led efforts at all stages of humanitarian action,

Recognizing also the need for the United Nations system and its partners to improve and strengthen the coordination and accountability of humanitarian assistance and leadership within the United Nations humanitarian response system in support of national efforts, and taking note of the efforts made by the United Nations and its partners, including through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations;

2. *Stresses* that the United Nations system should continue to enhance existing humanitarian capacities, knowledge and institutions, including, as appropriate, through the transfer of technology and expertise to developing countries, encourages the international community, the relevant entities of the United Nations system and other relevant institutions and organizations to support national authorities in their capacity-building programmes, including through technical cooperation and long-term partnerships, as well as strengthening their capacity to build resilience, mitigate disaster risks and prepare for and respond to disasters, and encourages Member States to create and strengthen an enabling environment for the capacity-building of their national and local authorities, national societies of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and national and local non-governmental and community-based organizations in providing timely humanitarian assistance;

3. *Takes note with appreciation* of the fourth session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Geneva from 19 to 23 May 2013, urges Member States to assess their progress in strengthening preparedness levels for humanitarian response, with a view to increasing efforts to develop, update and strengthen disaster preparedness and risk reduction measures at all levels, in accordance with the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disaster, in particular priority 5 thereof, taking into account their own circumstances and capacities and in coordination with relevant actors, as appropriate, and encourages the international community and relevant United Nations entities, including the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, United Nations funds and programmes, as well as the specialized agencies, to give increased priority to and mainstream disaster risk reduction, including preparedness, in particular through supporting national and local efforts in that regard;

4. *Encourages* Member States, as well as relevant regional and international organizations, in accordance with their specific mandates, to continue to support adaptation to the effects of climate change and to strengthen disaster risk reduction and early warning systems in order to minimize the humanitarian consequences of natural disasters, including those related to the continuing impact of climate change, especially for those countries that are particularly vulnerable;

5. *Welcomes* the growing number of initiatives undertaken at the regional and national levels to promote the implementation of the Guidelines for the Domestic Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance, encourages Member States and, where applicable, regional organizations to take further steps to review and strengthen operational and legal frameworks for international disaster relief, taking into account the Guidelines, as appropriate, and welcomes the recent efforts of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat and the Inter-Parliamentary Union to develop a model act on the subject;

6. *Encourages* efforts to enhance cooperation and coordination of United Nations humanitarian entities, other relevant humanitarian organizations and donor countries with the affected State, with a view to planning and delivering emergency

humanitarian assistance in ways that are supportive of early recovery as well as sustainable rehabilitation, reconstruction and development efforts;

7. *Also encourages* efforts to provide quality education in humanitarian emergencies, in particular for the well-being of boys and girls, to contribute to a smooth transition from relief to development;

8. *Requests* the Emergency Relief Coordinator to continue to lead the efforts to strengthen the coordination of humanitarian assistance, urges relevant United Nations organizations and other intergovernmental organizations, as well as other humanitarian and relevant development actors, including civil society, to continue to work with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to enhance the coordination, effectiveness, and efficiency of humanitarian assistance, and encourages Member States to improve their cooperation with the Office;

9. *Also requests* the Emergency Relief Coordinator to continue to improve dialogue with Member States on the relevant processes, activities and deliberations of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee;

10. *Encourages* United Nations humanitarian organizations and other relevant organizations, while strengthening the coordination of humanitarian assistance in the field, to continue to work in close coordination with national Governments, taking into account the primary role of the affected State in the initiation, organization, coordination and implementation of such assistance within its territory;

11. *Requests* the United Nations system and other relevant actors to continue to improve and strengthen humanitarian coordination mechanisms, notably at the field level, including the existing cluster coordination mechanism, and by improving partnership and coordination with national and local authorities, including the use of national/local coordination mechanisms, where possible;

12. *Welcomes* the continued efforts to strengthen the humanitarian response capacity in order to provide a timely, predictable, coordinated and accountable response to humanitarian needs, and requests the Secretary-General to continue efforts in this regard, in consultation with Member States, including by strengthening support to, and improving the identification, selection and training of United Nations resident/humanitarian coordinators;

13. *Requests* the United Nations to continue to identify solutions to strengthen its ability to recruit and deploy appropriately senior, skilled and experienced humanitarian staff quickly and flexibly, giving paramount consideration to the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, while paying due regard to gender equality and to recruiting on as wide a geographical basis as possible, and in this regard encourages the United Nations Development Group to strengthen the resident coordinator system on which the humanitarian coordinator system is based, in order to ensure full implementation of the management and accountability system of the United Nations development and resident coordinator system;

14. *Also requests* the United Nations to continue to develop specialist technical expertise and capacity to fill gaps in critical humanitarian programming and to procure emergency relief material rapidly and cost-effectively, and locally

when appropriate, in order to support Governments and United Nations country teams in the coordination and provision of international humanitarian assistance;

15. *Recognizes* the benefits of the effectiveness of the humanitarian response, including by engaging and coordinating with relevant humanitarian actors, and welcomes in this regard the recent efforts by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to build partnerships with regional organizations and the private sector, encourages Member States and the United Nations system to continue to strengthen partnerships at the global, regional, national and local levels in support of national efforts, which can cooperate effectively to provide humanitarian assistance to those in need and ensuring that their collaborative efforts adhere to the principles of neutrality, humanity, impartiality and independence, and encourages the United Nations to continue to pursue efforts to strengthen partnerships at the global level with the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, relevant humanitarian non-governmental organizations and other participants in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee;

16. *Encourages* Member States, the United Nations system and humanitarian and development organizations, in accordance with their respective mandates, to continue to assess and improve, together with other relevant stakeholders, including the private sector, how innovation can be more systematically identified and integrated into humanitarian action in a sustainable manner, and promote sharing of best practices and lessons learned on innovative tools, processes and approaches, including those from recent large-scale natural disasters, that could improve the effectiveness and quality of humanitarian response and in this regard encourages all relevant stakeholders to support the efforts of Member States, in particular developing countries, to strengthen their capacities, including through access to information and communication technologies;

17. *Expresses concern* at the challenges related to, inter alia, safe access to and use of fuel, firewood and alternative energy, telecommunications, water and sanitation, shelter and food, and health care in humanitarian emergencies, and takes note with appreciation of initiatives at the national and international levels that promote effective cooperation in that regard;

18. *Requests* the United Nations humanitarian organizations, in consultation with Member States, as appropriate, to strengthen the evidence base for humanitarian assistance by further developing common mechanisms to improve the quality, transparency and reliability of, and make further progress towards, common humanitarian needs assessments, to assess their performance in assistance and to ensure the most effective use of humanitarian resources by those organizations;

19. *Encourages* Member States to improve data collection and analysis, and facilitate the exchange of information with United Nations humanitarian organizations, in order to support preparedness efforts and to improve the effectiveness of needs-based humanitarian response, and encourages the United Nations system, as appropriate, and other relevant actors to continue to assist developing countries in their efforts to build local and national capacities for data collection and analysis;

20. *Requests* Member States, relevant United Nations organizations and other relevant actors to ensure that all aspects and stages of humanitarian response address the specific needs of women, girls, men and boys, on an equal basis, taking

into consideration age and disability, including through improved collection, analysis and reporting of sex-, age- and disability-disaggregated data, taking into account, inter alia, the information provided by States, and emphasizes the importance of the full participation of women in decision-making processes related to humanitarian response;

21. *Recognizes* that accountability is an integral part of effective humanitarian assistance and emphasizes the need for enhancing the accountability of humanitarian actors at all stages of humanitarian assistance;

22. *Calls upon* the United Nations and its humanitarian partners to enhance accountability to Member States, including affected States, and all other stakeholders, and to further strengthen humanitarian response efforts, including by monitoring and evaluating the provision of their humanitarian assistance, incorporating lessons learned into programming and consulting with the affected populations so that their needs are appropriately addressed;

23. *Urges* all actors engaged in the provision of humanitarian assistance to fully commit to and duly respect the guiding principles contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution 46/182, including the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality, as well as the principle of independence, as recognized by the Assembly in its resolution 58/114 of 17 December 2003;

24. *Calls upon* all States and parties in complex humanitarian emergencies, in particular in armed conflict and in post-conflict situations, in countries in which humanitarian personnel are operating, in conformity with the relevant provisions of international law and national laws, to cooperate fully with the United Nations and other humanitarian agencies and organizations and to ensure the safe and unhindered access of humanitarian personnel and delivery of supplies and equipment, in order to allow humanitarian personnel to perform efficiently their task of assisting affected civilian populations, including refugees and internally displaced persons;

25. *Calls upon* all parties to armed conflicts to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law;

26. *Calls upon* all States and parties to comply fully with the provisions of international humanitarian law, including all the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, in particular the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, in order to protect and assist civilians in occupied territories, and in that regard urges the international community and the relevant organizations of the United Nations system to strengthen humanitarian assistance to civilians in those situations;

27. *Encourages* Member States, in cooperation with relevant United Nations humanitarian organizations, to ensure that the basic humanitarian needs of affected populations, including food, shelter, health, clean water and protection, are addressed as components of humanitarian response, including through providing timely and adequate resources with the aim of ensuring the immediate restoration of safe conditions of life, alleviating the immediate effects of humanitarian emergencies and contributing towards long-term recovery and reconstruction, while ensuring that their collaborative efforts fully adhere to humanitarian principles;

28. *Urges* Member States to continue to take the steps necessary to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian personnel, premises, facilities, equipment, vehicles and supplies operating within their borders, and in other territories under their effective control, recognizes the need for appropriate collaboration between humanitarian actors and relevant authorities of the affected State in matters related to the safety and security of humanitarian personnel, requests the Secretary-General to expedite his efforts to enhance the safety and security of personnel involved in United Nations humanitarian operations, and urges Member States to ensure that perpetrators of crimes committed against humanitarian personnel on their territory or in other territories under their effective control do not operate with impunity and are brought to justice as provided for by national laws and in accordance with obligations under international law;

29. *Encourages* the United Nations and other relevant humanitarian actors to include as part of their risk management strategy the building of good relations and trust with national and local governments, and to promote acceptance by local communities, and all relevant actors, in order to enable humanitarian assistance to be provided, in accordance with humanitarian principles;

30. *Emphasizes* the fundamentally civilian character of humanitarian assistance, and, in situations in which military capacity and assets are used to support the implementation of humanitarian assistance, reaffirms the need for their use to be undertaken with the consent of the affected State and in conformity with international law, including international humanitarian law, as well as humanitarian principles;

31. *Urges* Member States to continue to prevent, investigate and prosecute acts of sexual and gender-based violence in humanitarian emergencies, calls upon Member States and relevant organizations to strengthen support services to victims of such violence, and also calls for a more effective response in that regard;

32. *Notes* the increasing challenges facing both Member States, in particular developing countries, and the international humanitarian response system in responding effectively to all humanitarian emergencies, in particular the underfunded and forgotten emergencies, and in that regard stresses the need to enhance existing and build new partnerships, strengthen financing mechanisms, broaden the donor base and engage other partners to ensure adequate resources for the provision of humanitarian assistance;

33. *Encourages* Member States, the private sector, civil society and other relevant entities to make contributions and to consider increasing and diversifying their contributions to humanitarian funding mechanisms, including consolidated and flash appeals, the Central Emergency Response Fund and other funds, based on and in proportion to assessed needs, as a means of ensuring flexible, predictable, timely, needs-based and, where possible, multi-year, non-earmarked and additional resources to meet global humanitarian challenges, encourages donors to adhere to the Principles of Good Practice of Humanitarian Donorship, and reiterates that contributions for humanitarian assistance should be provided in a way which is not to the detriment of resources made available for international cooperation for development, and encourages the United Nations and humanitarian organizations to consider making further use of multi-year consolidated appeals, as appropriate;

34. *Recognizes* that building preparedness is a long-term investment that will contribute to the achievement of humanitarian and development objectives, including a reduction in the need for humanitarian response, and therefore further encourages Member States, the United Nations system and other relevant actors to provide effective, predictable, flexible and adequate funding for preparedness and disaster risk reduction activities, including from humanitarian and development budgets, and stresses that international preparedness efforts reinforce and support national and local response capacities and institutions;

35. *Takes note* of the initiative of the Secretary-General calling for the World Humanitarian Summit in 2015 aimed at sharing knowledge and best practices in the humanitarian field to improve the coordination, capacity and effectiveness of humanitarian response, and requests the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to ensure an inclusive, consultative, transparent preparatory process including all Member States and relevant stakeholders;

36. *Requests* the Secretary-General to reflect the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the present resolution in his next report to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.